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Leslie Prusnofsky, M. D.
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Tarrytown, New York 10591

U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services
Assistant-Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Attention: Privacy-P, Room G-322A
Hubert Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D. C. 20201

Dear Sir,

Re: Comments on the "Treatment, payment, and health care operations" Section of the Standards of Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information, RIN0991-AB08

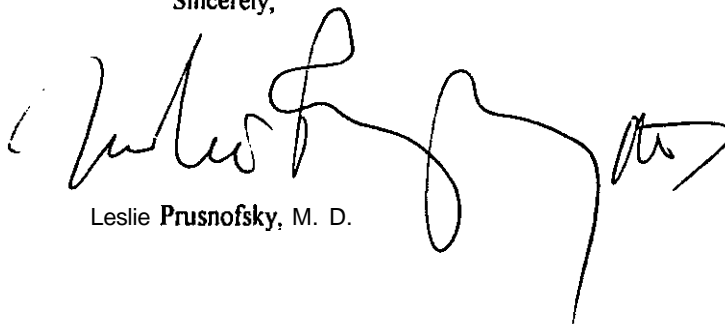
I would like you to please **urge the government to expressly state in the regulations that individuals have a right to privacy for all identifiable medical information.**

Statutory recognition for the privacy of psychotherapy communications is vital and must be preserved in the final draft. The privilege for psychotherapy-patient communications as established in the Supreme Court's Jaffee v. Redmond decision should be expressly recognized and should not be deemed to be waived for any disclosure required for treatment or payment of an insurance claim. (Needless to say, privacy of communications is essential for effective psychotherapy).

Patient consent should be required for the disclosure of all mental health information. Urge the government to adopt the "New Jersey" model for protecting mental health information, which contains this requirement.

The regulations should not permit disclosure of medical information related to items and services paid for with private funds, without the patient's express consent.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Prusnofsky', followed by a long horizontal flourish and a small mark at the end.

Leslie Prusnofsky, M. D.

RECEIVED FEB 04 2000